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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA MARKINGS AND CAPTION)

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - TFG MOVES FORWARD IN WAKE OF DECEMBER 3 BOMBING WITH PLANS TO REPLACE POLICE COMMISSIONER AND ARMED FORCES COMMANDER

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: TFG Prime Minister Sharmarke is pushing forward with plans to replace the TFG's controversial Police Commissioner and lackluster Armed Forces Commander in the wake of the December 3 suicide bombing that took the lives of three TFG ministers and left a fourth near death in a Nairobi hospital. Sources suggest that the Commissioner, Abdi Hassan Awale "Qeybdiid", has, after a week of resistance to his firing, finally accepted the fact that he must go. "Qeybdiid's" replacement had worked as a Police Commander during the administration of TFG ex-President Abdullahi Yusuf. He was most recently Somalia's Ambassador to Tanzania and, as a Marehan, part of an effort to generate Marehan resistance in Kismaayo to al-Shabaab. The new Commissioner at first glance brings little of significance to the TFG, but the replacement of warlord "Qeybdiid" with an Ambassador can be portrayed by the TFG as another step in its efforts to end its reliance on figures with complicated pasts whose loyalties are suspect. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) TFG Prime Minister Sharmarke told Somalia Unit that he was convening the TFG Council of Ministers on December 6 to formalize the removal of controversial Police Commissioner Abdi Hassan Awale "Qeybdiid," and his replacement with current Somalia Ambassador to Tanzania Ali Mohamed Hassan Loyan. (Note: "Qeybdiid" had been told that he was being replaced about one week ago in what observers describe as a tense meeting with TFG President Sharif and the Prime Minister. According to Sharif's Chief-of-Staff Abdikareem Jama, "Qeybdiid" had learned he was to be fired and confronted the President and Prime Minister at Villa Somalia in Mogadishu before they were ready to make the announcement. "Qeybdiid" at the time of his firing told Embassy contacts that he would not accept dismissal. He also at the time reportedly rejected the follow-on ambassadorship offered by the Prime Minister. In the days following his dismissal, "Qeybdiid" loyalists staged demonstrations against his firing. The demonstrations, and "Qeybdiid's" reputation for taking revenge on those who oppose him, caused some to believe that he had a hand in the December 3 suicide bombing that took the lives of four TFG ministers. Somalia Unit does not believe that to be the case. End note.)

¶3. (SBU) Sharmanke told Somalia Unit on December 6, in advance of the planned meeting, that he believed that the addition of Djiboutian and French-trained TFG troops had made "Qeybdiid," who had been brought into the TFG in part because he came complete with his own troops and technicals, less essential.

Sharmarke also thought that a silver lining in the cloud of the December 3 suicide bombing was that the subsequent rumors about "Qeybdiid's" involvement, although not true, had made it impossible for him to further resist his removal.

¶4. (SBU) "Qeybdiid's" replacement is current Somalia Ambassador to Tanzania Ali Mohamed Hassan Loyan. Loyan has been actively involved in efforts to build Kismaayo Marehan resistance to al-Shabaab in the wake of al-Shabaab's assassination of a prominent Marehan Kismaayo businessman. That effort has to date failed to gel. We understand that Loyan's tenure as a police commander under former TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf was undistinguished, and that he was ultimately fired in 2007 for failure to perform. Loyan was reportedly a National Security Service Colonel during the Siad Barre era where he was responsible, among other things, for containing resistance to Barre's then-increasingly unpopular regime.

¶5. (SBU) Also slated for replacement on December 6, according to Sharmarke, was Armed Forces Commander Yusuf Hassan "Dhumaal," a Marehan. "Dhumaal" had a lackluster run as Commander. He was unable to make much progress in integrating the TFG's ragtag security forces and was unwilling to accept advice from more experienced military professionals. "Dhumaal" was courageous: he was wounded in the leg during some of the Mogadishu fighting. According to Sharmarke and President Sharif's Chief-of-Staff Abdiqareem Jama, "Dhumaal" was to all appearances happy to be replaced and offered no resistance when given the news. He will be offered another job in the TFG.

¶6. (SBU) Slated to replace "Dhumaal" is Mohammed Gelle Kahiye "Nugagod." "Nugagod" was a military commander under Siad Barre. He is a Sa'ad/Ayaanle ("Qeybdiid" was Sa'ad/Hilowle.) Some sources tell us that "Nugagod" was not present in Somalia during the post-1991 civil war and is therefore not tainted by anything that happened during those turbulent years. He may be able to bring into the mix those Sa'ad who

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are fed up with al-Shabaab and willing to concentrate their energies to ousting al-Shabaab from Mogadishu, but his longtime absence from Somalia may mean that he lacks the personal connections to make that happen quickly.

¶7. (SBU) Sharmarke, in his December 6 conversation with Somalia Unit, made it clear that the TFG was determined to move forward. He rejected a December 5 suggestion by TFG Minister of Defense Abdullah Boss that the TFG would like to see all Joint Security Committee and High-Level Committee meetings postponed for one month in the wake of the suicide bombing.

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